

A D D S O M E
MUSIC

C O N T E N T S

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Letters

Sir:

I'd like to acknowledge receipt of the first installment of Add Some Music. Yours is different if only because it does approach a serious forum. I must confess that this format is somewhat humorous considering that the group, as far as I'm concerned, doesn't take itself seriously -especially of late. However, I am certain that there is a need for a more functional publication.

Stephen Peters
Ontario

Sir:

I may be becoming a dinosaur, but it seems to me that their most effective work recently has been with older songs (from the 50's and 60's). Off the top of my head I'd say that they are children of their own time -and I like that. I think it's probably very tasteful of them not to try to be part of this narcissistic, shallow era.

Bruce Golden
San Bernardino

Sir:

Do they refrigerate the roller-skating rinks in California?

Ed Marcus
New York

("Brrrr" -Ed.)

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Editorial

There seems to be an effect directed by all that California sunlight: an effect which slows down the artistic/creative process, given time. Witness the Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, and others, including the Beach Boys. During such a deceleration in production very often a personnel change will occur in a group, and it can do one of two things. It can serve to aggravate the decline, or, as a catalyst, it can reverse the trend and bolster the creative process. It is with great hope toward the latter idea that we welcome Bruce Johnston back to a fuller-time status with the Beach Boys. Over the years Bruce has displayed artistic courage as well as a sizable wherewithal. Before, during, and after his tenure as a Beach Boy Bruce showed us a temperament of patience and modesty, along with a willingness to work hard; whether singing on "God Only Knows," or writing for the Hudson Brothers.

This is not to say he can be the cure-all for the Beach Boys. For that we need the renewed energies of the Beach Boys themselves, especially the Wilson brothers. However, as stated, Bruce could serve as the catalyst; getting Carl to finish some of his songs, or getting Brian to sing a difficult part. More directly he could inject his song writing talents into new Beach Boy albums, along with his production know-how.

To be honest, we demand quite a lot from the Beach Boys. Bruce is in a unique position of standing somewhat outside family politics, yet being a legitimate family member. It is our hope that his influence, both artistically and emotionally will affect in a positive way one of the few groups in the world which can meet such demands.

-In addition, Add Some Music is preparing a Bruce Johnston discography for inclusion in a future issue, and would appreciate any information you have learned concerning rare recordings in which he has participated.

Music Update

The Beach Boys gave well-rehearsed and well-executed performances to capacity crowds at New York's Radio City Music Hall on March 1,2,3,4. In light of the imminent release of their first album with GBS, called L.A. (Light Album), the Beach Boys sang and played to a level of excellence not heard in years. There seemed to be first night jitters, but thereafter they were hitting all the notes, from the opening chords of "California Girls" to the "Fun, Fun, Fun" falsetto. Brian returned to California after the first night. Bruce Johnston was the overriding presence. Somehow responsible for the tightness of the music, Bruce lent a special poignancy to the nights as he soloed with "Disney Girls" and "I Write the Songs," as if to say, "yes, I am back," in a very special

way. Mike Love's audience repartee had no surprises, but he hit those low notes in "Heroes and Villains" right on target. Al and Carl sang extra well, as usual; Carl boosting his lead guitar at times for some impressive riffs. Dennis countered Mike's stage struts with his own comic, naughty boy antics. Five songs from the new album were done. Those were "Here Comes the Night," "Lady Lynda," "Suma Hama," "Good Timin'," and "Angel Come Home" (on at least one night). Charles Lloyd earned applause for his solo spots on flute and sax. Ed Carter was on bass until the encore, when Jim Guercio, Caribou records executive and longtime Beach Boy supporter, came out to play bass. The crowd response was normal (read pandemonian).

Meanwhile, Billboard lists "Here Comes the Night" as a national breakout, as of March 1. If you are still having trouble appreciating this tour de force by Bruce Johnston, Curt Becher, and the Beach Boys, try listening to all the other disco songs available, then come back to it. In Hartford the long version (2Z8-9028) is getting consistent airplay. The short version (ZS8-9026) is backed by Dennis' beautiful "Baby Blue." A melancholy tribute to someone special, it has marvelous chord progressions, and a perfectly arranged harmony accompaniment. Dennis recently told this reporter, "I wrote every note of it."

Rolling Stone magazine, which has been wont to pan Beach Boy albums of late, has actually used a line from the Beach Boy's "Johnny Carson" in prefacing their recent Carson story.



Endangered Pets

Throughout the year record companies send out "delete sheets" to record stores patroned by the good graces of we, the consumers. The latest Warner/Electra/Asylum list is a true harbinger of horrendous oversight. Without much thought, however, one could have predicted the news.

Here's the scoop, Lois. Remember the 20/20: Wild Honey rerelease? Well, old 2MS-2166 is off the boards as well as Friends: Smiley Smile. The covers were kind of neat; they'll look great in the junk racks at K-Mart and Caldor.

Carl and the Passions (always did sound better than Kenny and the Cadets), Pet Sounds (2RPS-2083) will join its ill-fated partners on death row. Gone, ex-ed, kaput and nada, senor; you need a mess of help to stay in print. But the real killer is the deletion of the album which has been canned before, only to resurrect itself.

The Capitol original; the Deluxe Set item; the Passion mate; the Brother/Reprise rerelease, and now Pet Sounds finds itself between reincarnations again. If you are keeping score, that leaves 14 Beach Boy albums on the market in their original forms. (-15 big ones if you wish to include Stack-o-Tracks, EMI-EST-24009) How about a CBS Pet Sounds? How about a CBS Smile? How's about an eight o'clock dinner?

Pet Sounds remains the only true arteur effort in the history of popular music; that is to say, the artist as one: Brian Wilson, the producer, arranger, writer, performer. No Spector, no George Martin -get the picture? Mike Love could call it "Brian's ego music." The Beach Boys could feel upstaged, but Brian and Pet Sounds stand alone nevertheless. The tragedy is that someone can not walk into the store, and pick up the album. And one can't help but feel that the locomotive at the end of side two was a train to nowhere, with one adult/child passenger destined for a world of pain and misunderstanding.

Thomas Ekwurtzel

Beach Boys Stomp

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Song Scrutiny

Why Do Fools Fall in Love (3 Times)

Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers
(Gee 1002, 1956)
Beach Boys (Capitol 5118, 1964)
Cal Music (Equinox 10363, 1975)

In last year's film, *American Hot Wax*, Alan Freed was shown giving a 'sidewalk' audition to an ersatz Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers. Listening to their hit version of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love" one is struck by the notion that perhaps someone had a tape recorder at that first encounter. The sound is that rough. But it is rough in a very good sense. It is that precious primitivism; that celebration of the human voice and spirit, that was known as doo-wop. Doo-wop was a poignant and timeless genre which avoided strings, percussion, overdubs, and more. The sound was real. Vocals produced all the feeling that was necessary, and excess production could only undermine the sentiment—that is, unless someone were to lift the song from the genre and set it down in a completely different musical environment; let's say early sixties, L.A. rock and roll.

Young Frankie Lymon helped to write "Why Do Fools Fall in Love," and for him that would prove to be a stroke of transcendental genius. It stands today as an exemplar of doo-wop. Yet, as society would have it, Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers were expendable, with Lymon himself dying tragically at an early age.

In 1964 Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys created an unabashed version of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love" which did no injustice to Lymon's version, and stands alongside it (at least) in terms of creative success, as well as in the people's memory.

It is instructive to contrast these two recordings because, in adapting someone else's material the machinations of a young, Spector-influenced Brian Wilson are especially revealed. No, Brian did not write the song, but he transformed it. Those were the days when, if the Beach Boys covered an oldie, it was a total redefinition of the song—an event. How we long for that state of affairs today, in light of 15 Big Ones and M.I.U.

Both versions appear to be in the key of F sharp, which is not an easy key to work with instrumentally. It could be that this is a speeded-up key of F, especially in the Beach Boys' case, where there is much more instrumentation. Of great interest are the introductory "doom-bas" because this is the one instance where Brian took it upon himself to alter the original structure. Lymon immediately establishes a secure tonic as the bass voice drops to low F sharp, then wanders upward. In Brian's opening the tonic is nowhere to be seen, and the wary listener must wait for the following

LYMON



WILSON



"ooh-wahs" in order to find the key. Brian's opening is roughly Lymon's turned upside down.

To further heighten the excitement here Brian seemingly speeds-up the tempo by firmly dividing some notes into half-beats. A philosophy of "making it fun" starts to become evident, even at this early point. One might check the difference between the Beach Boys' 45 version and the album track (yes, there were differences as early as 1964). On the album a sharp drum slap replaces Lymon's "yeah." Then the bass voice is alone, as in Lymon's version. On the 45 Brian withdraws the first beat and places a dense, yet ethereal harmony around the bass statement.

Frankie Lymon's version has a great jazz-tinged bass guitar supporting the melody of the A sections. The Beach Boy version has a more pop-oriented 3 note bass which is frequently joined by a vocal chorus. This is one example of Brian's opting for the impact of an overall sound texture rather than the excitement of a single instrument. This, of course is what Brian Wilson and Phil Spector are all about. "Why Do Fools Fall in Love" could be labeled in an oversimplified fashion as 'Frankie Lymon meets Phil Spector.' In the original production Lymon had used a stand-up bass, a simple drumbeat, the required sax, and faint, impromptu-sounding background vocals. Brian uses stronger percussion, with handclaps and something which sounds like castanets; introduces a rhythm guitar, and naturally comes on strong with backing vocals. At that time (early 1964),

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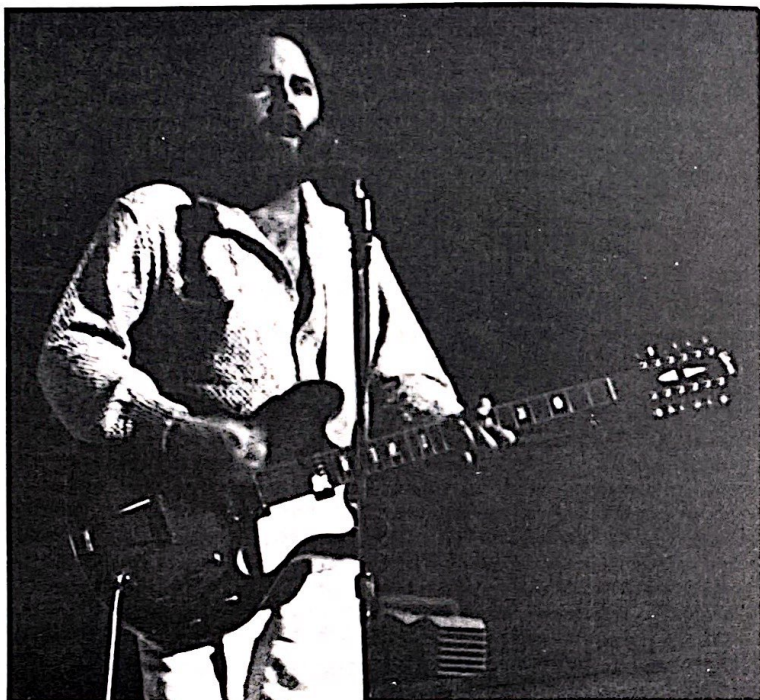
-Surfer Girl, Guess I'm Dumb-

it was the most ambitious and Spectorish production he had attempted. Remember that at that point Brian had only the Surfer Girl and Little Deuce Coupe albums to his credit.

The listener would do well not to attempt to choose the better of these two versions of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love." Both were extremely successful in accomplishing what it is supposed they set out to do. Frankie Lymon, with his precious boy-soprano lead vocal, and a bare, doo-wop setting, earned the biggest hit of his career. Brian's somewhat stronger 21-year-old falsetto complemented his burgeoning production sound and took a quantum leap in creativity.

In 1975 California Music, the Melcher/Johnston/Becher team, coaxed a somnolent Brian Wilson into the studio to cut a completely new version of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love." Set in a lower key of Dflat for a Terry Melcher vocal, this track is notable for its driving, Spectorish production. A soulful female voice joins Terry on the vocal, and Brian's rough voice can be heard in the chorus ("Why, why, why, why?"). Although there are a strong beat and strong percussion, the song loses momentum halfway through, giving the impression that Brian didn't finish it. The experience, however, may have been very important in terms of getting Brian back into the studio a year later.

Donald Cunningham



Rare Tracks

In late '62 or the beginning of '63 Brian met the future one and only female surf-group: the Honeys. They were sisters Marilyn and Diane Rovell and their cousin Ginger Blake (a.k.a. Sandra Glantz). They had been singing together for some time, doing commercials and back-up vocal work. Brian produced three singles by them in 1963, and married Marilyn at year's end. It has been said that some of the Honeys have sung on every Beach Boy album since. Besides making records with Brian they also continued to keep busy by doing session work for various L.A. artists. Ginger has been especially busy over the years, working on some very successful albums, such as Van Morrison's Wavelength.

In later issues we will get to the early surfing tracks which the Honeys did with Brian. For now we discuss some of the lesser known things the Honeys did.

Three Surfer Boys

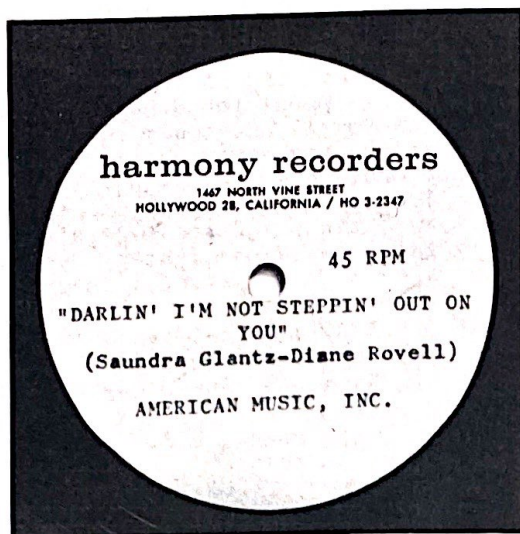
Gary Usher & the Usherettes
Dot 16518, July 1963
Value: \$15

The Honeys knew Gary Usher before they knew the Beach Boys, and it has been offered that it was he who introduced them to Brian. "Three Surfer Boys" came between the release of the first two Honeys singles. In the notes which accompany the Honeys album (1978) it says this song was written for Little Davy Summers, otherwise known as Russ Regan, the man who helped name the Beach Boys. Gary Usher ended up doing it with the Honeys, appropriately renamed the "Usherettes." There's more of the Honeys on this track than Gary Usher. Their cute, slowed introduction (just short of parody), and the quick "yea, yea's" they interject into Gary's vocal, along with some rhythmic hooks and even a cow bell, make the song a real charmer. Another strong hook is the emphasis on "instead--of." To my ears the girls' voices resemble Annette's, especially when they shout, "2, 4, 6, 8, what a way to spend a date!" Altogether this was a strong B-side to a Honey-less A-side titled "Milky Way."

Darlin' I'm Not Steppin' Out On You When I Think About You

Harmony Recorders
1963
Value: \$25 each

These are a couple of one-sided, eight inch demos done that first year which demonstrate an interest in Diane and Ginger quite outside the sphere of Brian's work. They are country songs, and surprisingly well written. "Darlin' I'm Not Steppin' Out On You" is an AABA structure sung as a duet in a very convincing country style. The melody is strong, and the B section is a traditional counter to the A section. Production is nearly complete, as an accomplished group of sessionists provide banjo, piano, drums, and some very



'country' steel guitar. The guitar riffs are especially notable. "When I Think About You" is given a countrified vocal by Ginger alone ("Ah don' care"). This is an ABA structure with a nice rhythmic thrust in the middle. There are a bass, drums, and some guitar, but the feel is that of an unfinished production.

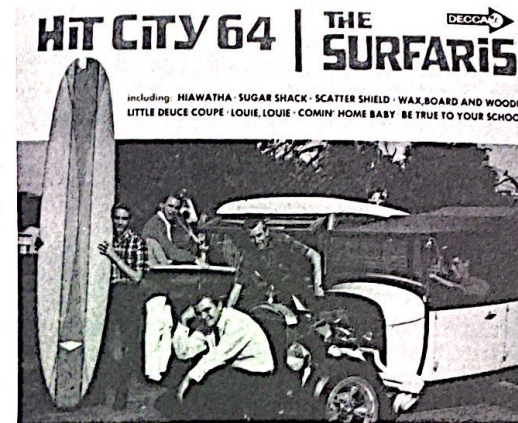
The impressive aspect of these two songs is the sophistication of both melody and lyrics, with both falling well within the confines of traditional country music.

Be True To Your School
I Wanna Take A Trip To The Islands

Album: Hit City '64
The Surfaris
Decca DL 74487
Value: \$10

The Surfaris were a coattail surf group sustained by the talents of drummer Ron Wilson. (no relation) However Wilson's abilities underscored both the good and the bad in the Surfaris's sound. On most upbeat vocal numbers his drumming played its part more than satisfactorily, but on the slower vocals and the instrumentals the ubiquitous drumming tended to shed light on the thinness of the total sound. The two 1964 songs which the Honeys (billed as 'chorus') back belong to the first class. Unfortunately, the insouciant style of Ron Wilson's vocal marries both tunes. Although he sometimes exudes a charm, for the most part his voice can not muster the conviction which is needed. The Honeys' voices are fine. On "Be True To Your School" they provide all the background work, unlike their limited use on the Beach Boy version of this song. They even provide a typical Beach Boy falsetto near the end.

"I Wanna Take A Trip To The Islands" is an enjoyable, but brief number written by Ron Wilson. Done with a fast tempo, he makes himself hurry the lead vocal -with satisfactory results. The Honeys play another large supporting role. As in "Be True..." their mild harmonies create an emotional density which most Surfari songs lack altogether.



Notes

Prices of Beach Boy records have been jumping lately. The Survivors single has gone for upwards of one hundred dollars. The American Spring single with title sleeve has fetched almost twenty dollars.

A bootleg of "Child of Winter" is available. It does not attempt to duplicate the original label, but is on Randy (sounds familiar). The 'B' side is the alternate version of "Good Vibrations," off the radio. The one copy of "Child of Winter" we listened to sounded horrible; as if the pressing was poorly done.

Along with the prestigious Ronco Company, Capitol Special Markets put out another hits package a while back entitled, "Beach Boys' Super Hits." It includes 18 songs prior to Pet Sounds, and has crass artwork. The record quality is dubious. (SL-8114)

The original 20/20 copy with tilted photo of Brian is not particularly rare, as reported last time. However, a non-foldout 20/20 which was sold through the record club, and has the entire eye chart on reverse, is hard to find.

The Dutch copy of "Bluebirds Over the Mountain" has a mix radically different from its American release. The percussion is more prominent, there is a 'boxed' guitar sound, and there is shouting in the middle.

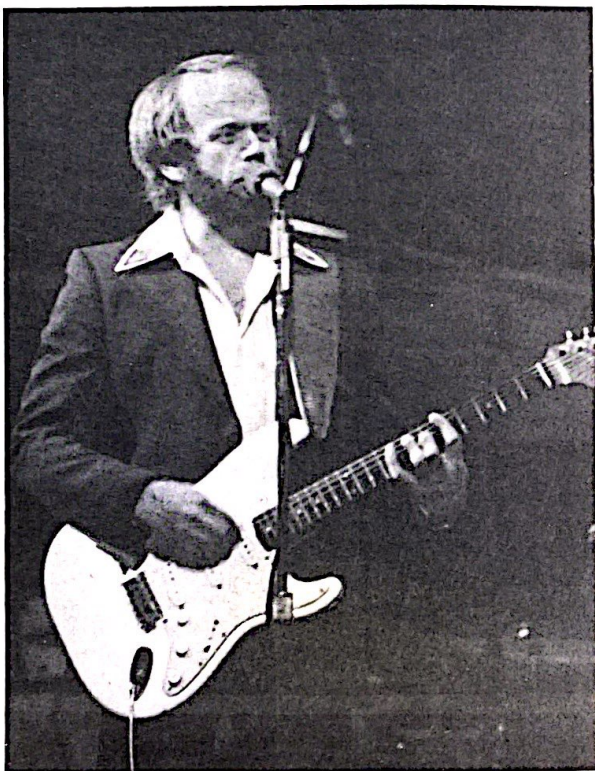
Interview

One piece of evidence for the idea that the Beach Boys have carved a unique and profound niche in the fabric of American popular music is the extent to which advertisers utilize their sound. Turn on the radio or TV and you will hear a Beach Boy song, a Beach Boy riff, or at least a sound influenced by the ideas of Brian Wilson. By far a most ambitious venture is the recent series of commercials for Sunkist orange soda, which directly use the song, "Good Vibrations." ASM spoke briefly with Foote, Cone & Belding, the advertising firm which created these commercials.

ASM What conclusions did you reach concerning the meaning and effect that this song has had on the public?

FCB "Good Vibrations" has proven to be a true classic in popular music. As to why "Good Vibrations" has proven to be so durable we really can't know. But we all have seen succeeding generations of music fans come to love that magic sound of the Beach Boys.

ASM Why did you produce various arrangements of the song?



FCB It is our feeling that the song lends itself musically to many different types of arrangements. And by producing radio spots with several different arrangements, we can avoid wear-out of the musical theme. Also, by producing various arrangements of the song, we are able to communicate, in different fashions, the key selling messages for the product.

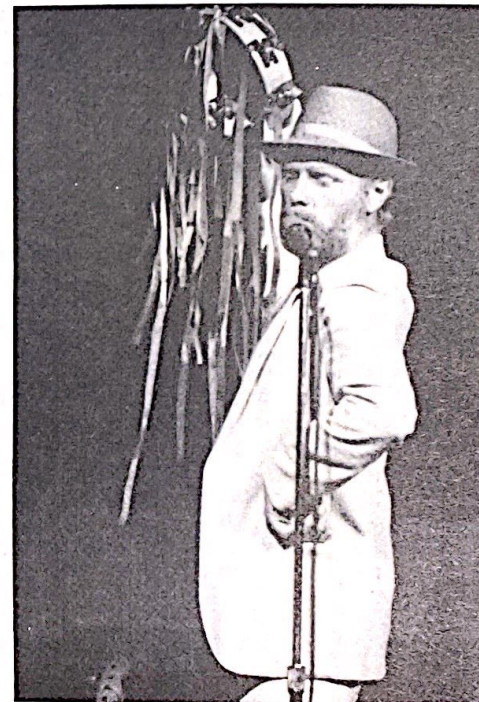
ASM Did you consult the Beach Boys on the actual production?

FCB No, but our musical producers did study quite extensively the key elements to the Beach Boys' sound.

ASM What were the considerations in selecting a recording studio, musical producer, arranger, and talent?

FCB In order to capture the essence of the Beach Boys' sound, and work it into an arrangement for Sunkist Orange Soda, we selected a commercial music production house that specializes in just the type of sound we were looking for. The group we hired for this job is called COM/TRACK -one of the best music houses in the country. The people at COM/TRACK were ultimately responsible for the arrangement of the Sunkist "Good Vibrations" commercials, which were written and produced by three people here at FCB.

ASM Exactly what kind of sound were you trying to achieve?



FCB In figuring out the actual musical direction, we went back and reviewed very closely the original Beach Boys' "Good Vibrations" song. There are many different little touches; little songs, within the original "Good Vibrations" tune that we took out and used as an entire 60 second approach for radio. We originally did three 60 second radio commercials, one which we called "Basic," which was just a basic rendition of "Good Vibrations." The second one we did was based on the beautiful harmonies that the Beach Boys are so well known for. This sound was new and fresh in the 60's, and as we discovered, it still works very well today. This commercial we called "A Cappella," which involves, to a great extent, singers carrying the tune without the support of musicians. The third commercial was one called "Concert," where we took the tune and presented it as if it were recorded at an actual concert. By doing so, we were able to create what we refer to as "theatre of the mind." We hear crowd noises and musicians tuning up, and a guy talking over a microphone to a large group of people about "this new soft drink that's come to town." Then he just breaks into the "Good Vibrations" song with the rest of his band. It fits very well into our radio format by generating a great deal of excitement and energy.

ASM Where were the commercials recorded?

FCB The recording and mixing of the Sunkist "Good Vibrations" commercials were done in Los Angeles and Chicago. As a matter of fact, the studio we used in LA was one which had been used previously by the Beach Boys. This left us with a feeling that the music just had to turn out great.

ASM It took Brian Wilson some six months and four or five studios to finish "Good Vibrations." How long did it take to finish these commercial tracks?

FCB We went ahead and first recorded the music from about 12 noon to six o'clock in the evening. Then from 6PM until midnight, we worked on the vocal arrangements. About two weeks later we brought those tracks back to Chicago and added a couple more instruments along with the lead singer's voice. We found the perfect voice here in Chicago. He's a rock and roll singer with a local band, and has a distinguished career in recording. If you've heard the music, you can understand why we like him. It took us about 20 hours of studio time, and about another four hours of mixing time for each commercial (which is a little unusual in the commercial business), but we realized that it would take that 'extra effort' to really capture the magic of the Beach Boys' sound.

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